

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of multicasting program content to a plurality of clients, said
2 method comprising:

3 providing a first key to a group of said plurality of clients;

4 providing a second key for use in decrypting a first portion of said
5 program content;

6 providing said second key to at least one client of said plurality of
7 clients;

8 utilizing said second key at a server to encrypt said first portion of said
9 program content so as to create an encrypted first portion of said program content;

10 multicasting said encrypted first portion of said program content to
11 said group of said plurality of clients;

12 permitting said at least one client to decrypt said encrypted first portion
13 of said program content with said second key.

14 2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein said first key is distributed
2 to said plurality of clients prior to multicasting said encrypted first portion.

3 3. The method as described in claim 1 wherein said providing said second
2 key to at least one of said plurality of clients comprises:

3 providing an encrypted second key to said at least one client;

4 allowing said at least one client to utilize said first key to decrypt said
5 encrypted second key so as to obtain said second key.

1 4. A method of multicasting comprising:

2 providing program content for multicasting to a plurality of clients;

3 encrypting a first portion of said program content by utilizing a first
4 key so as to produce an encrypted first portion of said program content;

5 providing said plurality of clients with said first key;
6 multicasting said encrypted first portion of said program content to
7 said plurality of clients prior to said plurality of clients indicating an intent to purchase said
8 program content.

1 5. The method as described in claim 4 and further comprising:
2 encrypting said first portion of said program content with said first key
3 for a predetermined period of time so as to allow a user to obtain a free preview of said
4 program content.

1 6. The method as described in claim 4 and further comprising:
2 prompting a user to purchase said program content.

1 7. The method as described in claim 4 and further comprising:
2 providing a guaranteed time period during multicasting of said first
3 portion of said program content so as to allow a client to purchase said program content
4 without presentation of said program content being interrupted.

1 8. The method as described in claim 7 and further comprising:
2 providing a second key;
3 encrypting a second portion of said program content with said second
4 key so as to produce an encrypted second portion of said program content;
5 providing said second key to each of said clients that purchased said
6 program content during said guaranteed time period, wherein said second key is operable to
7 decrypt said encrypted second portion of said program content; and then
8 multicasting said encrypted second portion of said program content to
9 said plurality of clients.

1 9. The method as described in claim 8 wherein said second key is
2 encrypted under a third key and wherein said third key is provided to a purchasing client after
3 purchase of said program content.

10. A method comprising:

providing program content for multicasting;

multicasting a first portion of said program content to a plurality of clients at no charge;

providing a guaranteed time period during multicasting of said first portion of said program content;

estimating a number of clients that will purchase said program content during said guaranteed time period;

receiving orders for said program content from at least one purchasing client during said guaranteed time period;

providing an initial key distribution period having a duration operable to provide cryptographic keys to said at least one purchasing client so as to allow reception of said program content not to be interrupted at said at least one purchasing client.

11. The method as described in claim 10 and further comprising:

adjusting said initial key distribution period.

12. The method as described in claim 11 wherein said adjusting said initial key distribution period comprises:

extending said initial key distribution period.

13. The method as described in claim 10 and further comprising:

determining an actual number of purchasing clients;

determining that said actual number of purchasing clients is greater than said estimated number of clients;

extending said initial key distribution period so as to allow presentation of said program content not to be interrupted at said at least one purchasing client.

- 1 14. A method of multicasting program content, said method comprising:
- 2 providing program content for distribution to a plurality of clients;
- 3 providing a first time period for purchasing an uninterrupted viewing
- 4 of said program content;
- 5 receiving a purchase request from a purchasing client for said program
- 6 content;
- 7 providing a second time period for purchasing said program content,
- 8 said second time period occurring after said first time period;
- 9 receiving a purchase request from a late purchasing client for said
- 10 program content during said second time period;
- 11 delaying decryption of said program content at said late purchasing
- 12 client until said program content can be decrypted at said late purchasing client without
- 13 interrupting presentation of said program content at said late purchasing client.

14 15. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable code for

15 performing a method comprising:

- 16 providing a first key to a group of said plurality of clients;
- 17 providing a second key for use in decrypting a first portion of said
- 18 program content;
- 19 providing said second key to at least one client of said plurality of
- 20 clients;
- 21 utilizing said second key at a server to encrypt said first portion of said
- 22 program content so as to create an encrypted first portion of said program content;
- 23 multicasting said encrypted first portion of said program content to
- 24 said group of said plurality of clients;

12 permitting said at least one client to decrypt said encrypted first portion
13 of said program content with said second key.

1 16. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 15 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:
3 distributing said first key to said plurality of clients prior to
4 multicasting said encrypted first portion.

1 17. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 15 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:
3 providing said second key to at least one of said plurality of clients.

1 18. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 17 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 providing an encrypted second key to said at least one client;

4 allowing said at least one client to utilize said first key to decrypt said
5 encrypted second key so as to obtain said second key.

1 19. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable code for
2 performing a method comprising:

3 providing program content for multicasting to a plurality of clients;

4 encrypting a first portion of said program content by utilizing a first
5 key so as to produce an encrypted first portion of said program content;

6 providing said plurality of clients with said first key;

7 multicasting said encrypted first portion of said program content to
8 said plurality of clients prior to said plurality of clients indicating an intent to purchase said
9 program content.

1 20. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 19 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 encrypting said first portion of said program content with said first key
4 for a predetermined period of time so as to allow a user to obtain a free preview of said
5 program content.

1 21. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 19 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 prompting a user to purchase said program content.

1 22. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 19 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 providing a guaranteed time period during multicasting of said first
4 portion of said program content so as to allow a client to purchase said program content
5 without presentation of said program content being interrupted.

1 23. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 22 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 providing a second key;

4 encrypting a second portion of said program content with said second
5 key so as to produce an encrypted second portion of said program content;

6 providing said second key to each of said clients that purchased said
7 program content during said guaranteed time period, wherein said second key is operable to
8 decrypt said encrypted second portion of said program content; and then

9 multicasting said encrypted second portion of said program content to
10 said plurality of clients.

1 24. The computer readable medium as described in claim 23 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code for encrypting said second key under a third key and
3 providing said third key to a purchasing client after purchase of said program content.

1 25. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable code for
2 performing a method comprising:

3 providing program content for multicasting;

4 multicasting a first portion of said program content to a plurality of
5 clients at no charge;

6 providing a guaranteed time period during multicasting of said first
7 portion of said program content;

8 estimating a number of clients that will purchase said program content
9 during said guaranteed time period;

10 receiving orders for said program content from at least one purchasing
11 client during said guaranteed time period;

12 providing an initial key distribution period having a duration operable
13 to provide cryptographic keys to said at least one purchasing client so as to allow reception of
14 said program content not to be interrupted at said at least one purchasing client.

26. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 25 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 adjusting said initial key distribution period.

27. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 26 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 extending said initial key distribution period.

1 28. The computer-readable medium as described in claim 25 and further
2 comprising computer-executable code operable for performing:

3 determining an actual number of purchasing clients;

4 determining that said actual number of purchasing clients is greater than said
5 estimated number of clients;

6 extending said initial key distribution period so as to allow presentation of said
7 program content not to be interrupted at said at least one purchasing client.

1 29. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions
2 for performing a method comprising:

3 providing program content for distribution to a plurality of clients;
4 providing a first time period for purchasing an uninterrupted viewing
5 of said program content;
6 receiving a purchase request from a purchasing client for said program
7 content;
8 providing a second time period for purchasing said program content,
9 said second time period occurring after said first time period;
10 receiving a purchase request from a late purchasing client for said
11 program content during said second time period;
12 delaying decryption of said program content at said late purchasing
13 client until said program content can be decrypted at said late purchasing client without
14 interrupting presentation of said program content at said late purchasing client.